

## Message Text

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ORIGIN PA-02

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SS-15 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 ICA-20 SAA-01  
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA PRIORITY

UNCLAS STATE 200652

FOR HODDING CARTER FROM TOM RESTON

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS R.)

SUBJECT:AUGUST 8 NOON PRESS BRIEFING

NO. 6

1. LEBANON DOMINATED ALMOST ENTIRE AUGUST 8 NOON PRESS BRIEFING. SPOKESMAN OPENED BRIEFING BY MAKING FOLLOWING STATEMENT: "WE NOTE THE SLIGHT, IMMEDIATE IMPROVEMENT ON THE GROUND IN BEIRUT TODAY. THE FIGHTING MUST NOW BE STOPPED, AND THE CEASEFIRE MUST BE SCRUPULOUSLY OBSERVED BY ALL. THE SITUATION REMAINS EXTREMELY DANGEROUS, AND WE CONTINUE TO REMAIN IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT AND OTHER QUARTERS, STRONGLY URGING THAT EVERYONE WITH INFLUENCE ON THE SITUATION EXERCISE RESTRAINT AND DO ALL POSSIBLE TO ASSURE THAT CALM AND STABILITY ARE RESTORED. A CEASEFIRE AND BREATHING SPELL ARE ESSENTIAL,  
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SO THAT EFFORTS CAN BE RESUMED TO RESOLVE THE ISSUES WHICH HAVE LED TO THESE TERRIBLE OUTBREAKS OF FIGHTING."

2. ON SOUTHERN LEBANON, SPOKESMAN SAID: "THE LEBANESE UNIT REMAINS IN THE KAWKABA AREA. LAST NIGHT THIS UNIT WAS SHELLED BY CHRISTIAN MILITIA FORCES, AND ONE SOLDIER WAS KILLED AND SIX INJURED.

WE STRONGLY DEPLORE THIS FIRING AND THE KILLING AND INJURING OF THE LEBANESE SOLDIERS. THESE RECKLESS ACTIONS BY THE MILITIAS MUST STOP.

THE SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON IS EXTREMELY COMPLICATED, AND THE LEBANESE CABINET WILL TODAY, WE UNDERSTAND, BE MEETING TO EXAMINE WHAT MIGHT BE DONE.

AS FOR WHAT WE ARE DOING, WE ARE DOING WHAT WE CAN TO FACILITATE REESTABLISHMENT OF THE AUTHORITY OF THE LEBANESE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT IN SOUTHERN LEBANON, CONSISTENT WITH THE AIMS OF UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 425."

3. ON ISRAELI SUPPLY OF ARMS TO CHRISTIAN MILITIAS IN LEBANON, THE FOLLOWING EXCHANGES TOOK PLACE: "Q: DOES THE DEPARTMENT HAVE ANY IDEA OF WHETHER THERE IS ANY TRUTH TO THE PERSISTENT REPORTS THAT THE CHRISTIAN MILITIA, WHOM YOU SAY ARE ACTING RECKLESSLY, ARE BEING SUPPLIED BY THE ISRAELIS?

A: THE LAST I THINK WE SAID ON THAT WAS THAT WE HAD SEEN PRESS REPORTS THAT THERE WERE ARMS BEING SUPPLIED TO THE MARONITE COMMUNITY, AND WE HAD BEEN HAVING DISCUSSIONS WITH THE ISRAELIS ABOUT THOSE REPORTS. I DON'T BELIEVE I, UNCLASSIFIED

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OR ANYONE HERE, HAS EVER CONFIRMED THAT WE HAVE INDEPENDENT CONFIRMATION.

Q: GOING BACK FOR A SECOND TO THE LEBANESE THING, WOULD THE UNITED STATES OPPOSE IN PRINCIPLE THE SUPPLYING OF ARMS TO THE CHRISTIAN MILITIA BY ISRAEL OR ANYONE ELSE?

A: WHAT WE HAVE SAID IN PRINCIPLE, AND THIS REMAINS POLICY, IS THAT WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY BEEN IN FAVOR OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AUTHORITY OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON THROUGHOUT ITS TERRITORY.

WE HAVE NOTED THAT THE SITUATION IS EXTREMELY DANGEROUS. WE HAVE CALLED FOR A REDUCTION IN THE AMOUNT OF ARMAMENTS IN THE AREA. INCREASES IN ARMAMENTS FROM WHATEVER QUARTER THEY COME WOULD BE INCONSISTENT WITH A REDUCTION OF ARMAMENTS, WHICH IS WHAT WE SEEK TO ACHIEVE."

4. WITH REGARD TO A LETTER FROM THE ISRAELI KNESSET TO THE AMERICAN CONGRESS ON THE SITUATION IN LEBANON, SPOKESMAN SAID AS FOLLOWS: "AS FAR AS THE LETTER IS CONCERNED, IT IS A COMMUNICATION TO MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, AND I THINK

THE PLACE FOR YOU TO ASK ABOUT THE LETTER IS UP ON THE HILL.

AS TO THE ISSUE RAISED BY THE LETTER, WE HAVE URGED AND ARE CONTINUING TO URGE ALL THOSE WHO HAVE A ROLE IN OR INFLUENCE ON THE SITUATION, TO ACT WITH EXTREME RESTRAINT, AND TO DO EVERYTHING WITHIN THEIR POWER TO SEE THAT THE FIGHTING IS BROUGHT TO AN END AND THAT THE CEASEFIRE IS HONORED.

WE HAVE BEEN IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH MANY QUARTERS ON THE LEBANESE SITUATION, INCLUDING THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT.

I AM NOT GOING TO BE IN A POSITION TO GO INTO THE SUB-UNCLASSIFIED

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STANCE OF THOSE DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGES. BUT I MIGHT ADD THAT THEY HAVE BEEN CONSISTENT WITH OUR CALLS FOR RESTRAINT BY ALL, AND OBSERVATION OF THE CEASEFIRE BY ALL." CHRISTOPHER

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